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## Remarks on L. Wittgenstein's Form of Life

Wittgenstein uses the concept of form of life only five times in his *Philosophical Investigations*<sup>1</sup>. Four of them are helpful when one tries to capture the meaning of form of life. This fact can actually be explained in many ways. First of all, the concept of form of life is not important for Wittgenstein. Secondly, he uses other concepts instead. Thirdly, it is "the semantic field" of concepts correlated with form of life that is important and not merely form of life itself<sup>2</sup>. However, there is no doubt that the concept of form of life is one of the key categories in the second period of Wittgenstein's philosophy<sup>3</sup>. Two other concepts, namely, 'grammar' and 'criterion', are closely connected with form of life and they make it possible to penetrate deeper into a given problem. During the analysis of these categories their mutual relations and connections will be mainly emphasized. The reflections will consider 'the logic of structure' in the first case and 'the logic of function', in the second case.

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<sup>1</sup> L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, transl. G. E. M. Anscombe, Oxford: Basil Blackwe, 1958.

<sup>2</sup> M. Black, „"Lebensform" and „Sprachspiel" in Wittgenstein's Later Work", in: *Wittgenstein and His Impact on Contemporary Thought*, Vienna 1978, p. 325

<sup>3</sup> N. Malcolm, "Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*", in: G. Pitcher (ed.), *Wittgenstein: "The Philosophical Investigations"*, New York 1966. Malcolm writes like this: "One could hardly place too much stress on this...notion [of 'form of life'] in Wittgenstein's thought".

## The Context of Grammar

Grammar<sup>4</sup> is discussed by Wittgenstein in two ways: linguistic and metaphysical<sup>5</sup>. The former performs an important function, however limited to language as such. First of all, grammar can discuss the connections between words, which consequently leads to the analysis of the internal logic of language. Showing “a grammatical reference” between two expressions takes place here, as well as revealing false analogies between them as “grammatically delusive”. Secondly, grammar in this approach can diagnose conceptual puzzlements, leading to ‘purifying’ language. Here the philosopher emphasises the non-empirical character of grammar. Although it sometimes seems that questions have an empirical character, actually they are grammatical by nature: “You have a new conception and interpret it as seeing a new object. You interpret a grammatical movement made by yourself as a quasi-physical phenomenon which you are observing” [PI 401]. This kind of puzzlements occurs when “we predicate of the thing what lies in the method of representing it” [PI 104].

According to the philosopher, linguistic puzzlements occur when one gets lost in the grammar of expressions, as a result of being entangled in the rules regulating their use [PO 90]. In effect, puzzlement ceases to be a paradox but by means of inciting inquiries it allows us to get a clear vision of grammar itself. As an example we can use the philosopher’s remarks on such words as “to know”, “knowledge”, “getting to know” (but also “chair”) [BB, p. 23–24]. What follows from them is the fact that the grammar of a given word gives us the review of the variety of expressions in which a given word appears in a typical way. Out of these remarks the second important feature of grammar emerges, namely its connection with the world, which refers us to the metaphysical aspect of the use of grammar.

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<sup>4</sup> One should not confuse grammar understood by Wittgenstein with grammar as a set of rules. The first one has a philosophical (logical) character and the second one a linguistic character.

<sup>5</sup> J. Bouveresse, “La notion de ‘grammaire’ chez le second Wittgenstein”, in: *Wittgenstein et le problème d’une philosophie de la science*, Paris 1970, p. 173–89; R. Harris, *Language, Saussure and Wittgenstein – How to play games with words*, Routledge, 1988, p. 61–86.

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The thing is not about understanding the connection literally because the relation between the world and grammar has an indirect character, it is mediated through language. However, it does not prevent us from investigating the essence of an object as such. But "essence is expressed by grammar" [PI 371] which means that the analysis of grammar of a notion (for example "knowledge") allows us to formulate the essence of a corresponding object (knowledge)<sup>6</sup> This actual showing of the world through language (grammar) is interesting but we need to ask ourselves about the mere possibility of its happening, which is so far mysterious. Wittgenstein passes the following remark: "Grammar tells what kind of object anything is" [PI 373], in other words, grammar is a matter of "determining the relation between an expression and what in the world that expression is used for"<sup>7</sup>.

Grammar determines the place of a notion in the system of notions (of language), and also, what follows from the quotations mentioned above, its connection with an object. In this way grammar 'controls' the possible references of other notions to the given one, their relation with it. It is obvious that it is grammar and not an object that possesses the possibilities of all the situations. To know grammar of a word is to know what kind of objects can be combined with a word. For grammar governs "the 'possibilities' of phenomena" by regulating "the *kind of statement* that we make about phenomena" [PI 90]<sup>8</sup>. Thereby it determines 'the content' of the world in both its possible and actual existence.

One should pay attention to one more, essential feature of grammar. As a set of rules determining in which relations words

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<sup>6</sup> H.F. Pitkin, *Wittgenstein and Justice*, Univ. of California Press, 1973, p. 117.

<sup>7</sup> P. Cavell, *The Claim to Rationality*, Harvard Univ., 1962, p. 46.

<sup>8</sup> H.F. Pitkin, *op.cit.*, p. 121.

have meaning and sentences make sense, grammar 'describes' it in such a way that it specifies the sphere of what is describable. In other words, it describes the use of words in language and the conditions of representing the world through sentences [PG 23,345]. It does not decide about the truth or falsity of a sentence, it rather investigates the conditions and methods of its reference to the world. Thus, this reference represents the conditions of sentence's understanding [PG 45].

Grammar describes but does not explain, and at the same time it does not formulate any postulates about language, it only describes its use. "Grammar does not tell us how language must be constructed... It only describes and in no way explains the use of signs" [PI 496]<sup>9</sup>. Description is here understood very widely, it embraces various aspects of conceptualising the world. Moreover, description is "a clear view of the use of our words", allowing us to, as a result of it, dismiss one of the main sources of our misunderstandings; "A perspicuous representation produces just that understanding which consists in "seeing connexions'. [...] The concept of perspicuous representation is of fundamental significance for us. It earmarks the form of account we give, the way we look at things" [PI 122].

### The Aspect of Practice

An essential moment appears through referring the grammatical analysis to the notion of practice<sup>10</sup>. Wittgenstein defines practice as acting according to a rule, expressing in this way the constituent aspect of the relation between language and the world. The prospect of this relation becomes the basis for the categorization of different aspects of human existence in the world. Besides, what is equally important, the category of practice becomes normative in character, it shows the logical possibility of notional depic-

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<sup>9</sup> A good illustration of this problem used by Wittgenstein is Euclidean space and geometry connected with it. See L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Grammar*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969, p. 319.

<sup>10</sup> K.P. Johanessen, "Language, Art and Aesthetic Practice...", in: *Wittgenstein – Aesthetics as Transcendental Philosophy*, Vienna 1981, p. 112.

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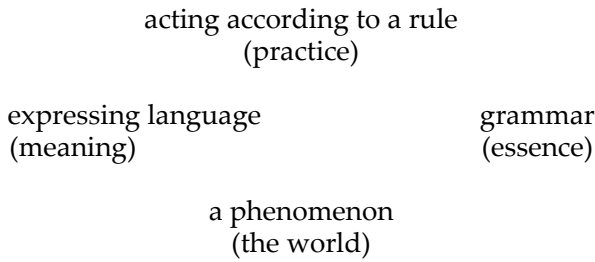
tion of the surroundings and of oneself. The relation between language and practice allows one to state that the description of the second category is, at the same time, a grammatical description of linguistic games, which take place. This description allows at the same time of delimiting the intelligibility of a given phenomenon with which a context in the world takes place. The limits of intelligibility are notional ones, expressed by the grammatical description of inter-notional relations.

Studying the logical grammar of a given practice allows of formulating the identity of a phenomenon constituted by practice, as a result of the review of its various relations with surrounding practices. For that reason, to make a logically-grammatical analysis of a given concept is to show the account of practices in which this concept functions and to show its relations with adjacent practices, and this, in consequence, means investigating the conditions of possibilities of a corresponding phenomenon. Wittgenstein states: "We feel as if we had to *penetrate* phenomena: our investigation, however, is directed not towards phenomena, but as one might say, towards the '*possibilities*' of phenomena" by regulating "the *kind of statement* that we make about phenomena. [...] Our investigation is therefore a grammatical one" [PI 90].

Out of the above remarks emerges a particular image of mutual dependences. Language constitutes a phenomenon as this particular one and not another one. Language, on the other hand, is constituted as an essential tool in communication and mutual influence as a result of being assigned to human acting (practices). Thus, we have the following relation:

	practice	
language		the world

which in a more detailed description takes the following form:



### The Aspect of Criterion

Asking about a criterion moves us into another level, but we are still in the field of philosophical grammar, (form of life). Criterion is one aspect of this grammar and it appears when explaining grammar of a given expression. It appears literally, which means that it is the object of reflections. However, it does not mean that when we do not direct our attention to the problem of criterion this problem does not exist. Criteria, residing in the background of our statements, are "potential answers to potential questions like 'how do you know?' 'how can you tell?' 'what makes you think so?' 'why do you say that?'"<sup>11</sup>.

Criteria do not concern all our statements, but they become essential when we do not perceive an object directly, when our knowledge about an object is not given to us in that way<sup>12</sup>. It especially applies to the states of feeling, supposing, understanding, expecting, etc. [PI 182, 572, 573]. Notions associated with them are very complex because they are connected with many expressions and situations in which they are used.

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<sup>11</sup> H.F. Pittkin, *Wittgenstein and Justice*, *op.cit.*, p. 126. It should be here noted that Wittgenstein distinguishes between a criterion and a symptom, characterizing briefly the second term. However, it is not essential for the present remarks and therefore it will be discussed only to a limited extent.

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The notion of criterion is connected with the concept of symptom; it is raised when answering a question: "How do you know that so-and-so is the case?" [BB, p.24] This seems to suggest that both notions can be used interchangeably. However, it is not the case. It is clearly seen when we say: "so-and-so signs (data) show that so-and-so occurs". Here, a reference to symptoms takes place. However, when we say: "what kind of signs (data) must there be in order for so-and-so to occur", we refer to a criterion. The difference boils down to the fact that the first case concerns the empirical level, and the second one goes beyond this level and it constitutes a point of reference to it. It is here clearly shown that Wittgenstein presents criterion and symptom as different types of justification of statements.

Wittgenstein writes that a symptom is "a phenomenon of which experience has taught us that it coincided, in some way or other, with the phenomenon which is our defining criterion" [BB, p. 25]. Therefore a symptom is correlated with a notion empirically, behind which stands a criterion. Such a relation expresses a hypothesis. The relation between a concept and a criterion, on the other hand, creates a tautology or a definition. A criterion determines a notion (the meaning of a notion) in a decisive way; hence, the empirical obviousness cannot influence its relation with a notion. The difference between a criterion and a symptom can be expressed in such a way that it is the difference between a logical relation and an empirical relation<sup>13</sup>.

We can get a good clarification of the problem of criterion if we discuss it in the context of linguistic games on the one hand and

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<sup>13</sup> J.T.E. Richardson, *The Grammar of Justification. An Interpretation of Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Language*, New York 1976, p. 119.

language as a whole on the other<sup>14</sup>. In the first case, it is about emphasizing the fact that the notion of a linguistic game entails the distinction between playing (a game) and learning (a game). In the second case, it is about depiction of language as a set of linguistic games. It allows us to realize that not only a linguistic game (its rules) but also language itself sets the limits of obliging and validity of a criterion. The reasons why a criterion is formulated as a not expressive basis of language are here seen. A criterion gets its linguistic (verbal) form when the game stops, when doubts occur and when study of next moves in a game begins. Thus, a criterion possesses the feature of necessity and non-informativeness.

A criterion shows a specific asymmetry between expressions that refer to the first and the third person. A question concerning the mental state of another person often makes sense, but such a question directed to oneself does not. It does not make sense to say that "I know", that I feel so and so: "It can't be said of me at all (except perhaps as a joke) that I *know* I am in pain. What is it supposed to mean – except perhaps that I *am* in pain? [...] The truth is: it makes sense to say about other people that they doubt whether I am in pain; but not to say it about myself [PI 246].

In conclusion, we can say that a criterion has a definitional character that does not have to be established once and for all. Hence, the final criterion does not exist. It means that a phenomenon is not imposed as a criterion but it can be recognized as such. This leads to the distinction (similarly as in the case of a rule) between a criterion and a 'criterial sign' ('a criterial word')<sup>15</sup>. A criterion determines the way of employing 'a criterial sign', which means that it justifies ascribing some expression of relation occurring between phenomena.

The analysis of the concept of criterion reveals its potential aspect, its topicality and the circumstances of topicality. It means that in the idea of criterion there reside some assumptions. First, a criterion functions in specific circumstances which are usually not verbalized. Secondly, these circumstances are not stated during formulating 'a criterial sign' but they result from some aspects of the linguistic background that constitutes a modifying reference

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<sup>14</sup> T. Czarnecki, "Criterion and Defeasibility", in: *Akten des 14 Internationalen Wittgenstein-Symposiums, August 1989, Wien 1990*, p.116.

<sup>15</sup> T. Czarnecki, *Gramatyka filozoficzna pojęcia 'rozumienie' według L. Wittgensteina*, The typescript of a doctoral dissertation, the Jasiellonian Library, p. 48–51.



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(not verbalized support or obstacle) to linguistic actions. All these features attributed to a criterion usually lead to the adoption of the linguistic conventionalism of Wittgenstein's second philosophy.

### The Concept of Grammar

Similarly as in the previous cases, here Wittgenstein does not specify the notion<sup>16</sup>, therefore on the basis of very few remarks that have been made it is necessary to interpret this term. It is said that this category belongs to one of the three basic ones of Wittgenstein's later thought<sup>17</sup>. It is also said that the expression "form of life" replaces "grammar", the main category of *Blue and Brown Books* in the later period<sup>18</sup>. In the literature on this topic taken literally, it receives the following general meaning.

An interesting issue emerges out of Wittgenstein's statement: "to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life" [PI 19]. A relation of total subordination of the first element to the second one is here clearly shown. However, we can ask ourselves a ques-

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<sup>16</sup> It should be here noticed that the author of the German translation consistently translates the German expression *Lebensform*, which has its English equivalent *Form of Life*, as a way of life. However, it seems not to be adequate because there is a difference between the meaning of the expression 'the way of life' and the expression 'form of life'. The latter includes some contents that the first one does not. You may say that philosophy is a certain way of life; you definitely cannot say that it is form of life.

<sup>17</sup> P.F. Strawson, "Review of Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigation", in: G. Pitcher (ed.), *Wittgenstein, The Philosophical Investigations: A Collection of Critical Essays*, New York 1966, p. 62.

<sup>18</sup> H. F. Pittkin, *op.cit.*, p. 132.

tion whether this relation is transitive; whether to imagine a way of life is to imagine a language. The question concerns the possibility of identifying both categories and fields that they determine. The positive answer would mean that form of life is linguistic in character. Consequently, human existence would have to possess such a character. A man would fall into the totalitarianism of language.

In one of the next paragraphs Wittgenstein specifies the type of dependence between these categories. From this statement it follows that it is one-way relation; a linguistic game is only one aspect of form of life: "Here the term 'language-game' is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life" [PI 23]. The way of life (read: form of life) has a wider scope than language; hence language constitutes only a part of it.

Although the philosopher clearly exhibits this relation, it may be interesting to reverse it. The thing is that form of life as such is not directly expressed. Its depiction is possible only indirectly, through some kind of medium, in this case language. The distinction into "what can be shown" and "what can be said" (taken from the *Tractatus*) seems to be explicatively useful. In this context the way of life can be 'shown' because it harmonises with language, it is blended with its manifestations. And it happens both when we mean the sphere of constitutive and pragmatic rules. They belong to "natural history of human being [...] which have escaped remark only because they are always before our eyes" [PI 415]<sup>19</sup>.

The analysis of the notion of form of life often leads to the acceptance of the view of the conventional character of language (linguistic game, rule) in Wittgenstein's second philosophy. Conventionalism as such is understood in many ways.

1. In a popular, commonsensical understanding convention is the counterpart of a contract, a result of a given compromise consciously accepted by people. But this kind of conventionalism plays a marginal role in shaping language.

2. In another approach conventionalism expresses a conviction that a given 'object' is accepted not as a result of judicious agreement or a conscious choice but it is rather accepted as a result of involuntary and constant activity of people. A significant part of

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* p. 133.

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language in the aspects that distinguish one language from another can be recognized as conventional.

3. However, there exists yet another sense of this notion, which is possibly closest to the idea of form of life. It is about "natural conventions", which result from the features of life and the world. These conventions are made neither by a custom nor by an agreement but rather "by the nature of human life itself, the human fix itself"<sup>20</sup>.

Usually paragraph no. 241 of *Philosophical Investigations* in the context of paragraph no. 240 is quoted. "Disputes do not break out (among mathematicians, say) over the question whether a rule has been obeyed or not. [...] That is part of framework on which the working of our language is based (for example, in giving descriptions)" [PI 240]. A consent results from some 'frames' ("framework") on which language functions. There is no problem with inappropriate or appropriate use of rules, because there exists consent to language, which is not unanimity of judgements and "that is not agreement in opinions but in form of life" [PI 241 ]. Therefore, taking part in form of life is 'visible' in consent to a given application of given rules<sup>21</sup>. In other words, "when we talk of the way linguistic conventions limit the possibilities of what can happen in the world, what we will accept as instances of various phenomena, we must also recognize that those conventions are not merely arbitrary; they are part of a conceptual network which works, which functions for us"<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> P. Cavell, "Claim to Reason", p. 217, "Here the array of 'conventions' are not patterns of life which differentiate men from one another, but those exigencies of conduct which all men share", p. 98; a quote after: H.F. Pitkin, *op.cit.*, p. 133.

<sup>21</sup> M. Black, "Lebensform...", *op.cit.*, p. 326.

<sup>22</sup> H.F. Pittkin, *op.cit.*, p. 136–137.

Making absolutism out of this view does not seem to be justified. First, it needs to be noted that the last interpretation of convention (out of the ones discussed above) is so distinct from the usually ascribed meaning that it is, in fact, at variance with it. Moreover, the problem is so complicated because some of the philosopher's statements are the basis for opposite interpretations, namely interpretations that accept or dismiss conventionalism. And yet an essential, grammatical difference between such notions as: a rule, a linguistic game, language, form of life needs to be emphasized. The often quoted fragment is paragraph no. 355 of *Philosophical Investigations*, which serves as an argument for the first standpoint and whose conclusions are transferred to the rest of categories: "The point here is not that our sense-impressions can lie, but that we understand their language. (And this language as any other is founded on convention.)" [PI 355].

With reference to form of life such a conclusion is not justified for at least two reasons. First of all, it is enough to cite an appropriate quotation: "What has to be accepted, the given, is – so one could say – *forms of life*" [PI, II xi, p. 226]<sup>23</sup>. The fact that these ways are given means that they do not fall under any form of manipulation; their acceptance is a fundamental and necessary moment. Hence, to depict the relation of a man with a way of life what is necessary is not a genetic relationship but a logical one. Using a metaphor that functions in another philosophy, it can be said that a man is 'thrown' into form of life. Thereby, logically thinking, the attitude of a subject to this category, its acceptance or desire to change it does not matter.

Secondly, the aspect of function served by form of life needs to be emphasized. It is a category that fulfills plays the same role as the role that the logical form is attributed in *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* (TLP). This fact entails very specific and momentous consequences. In TLP Wittgenstein says that "to present the logical form we would have to place ourselves together with a sentence beyond logic, that is outside the world" [4.12]. In this case it is sim-

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<sup>23</sup> Also the previous statement of Wittgenstein: "the fact that we act in such and such a way, e.g. punish certain actions, establish the state of affairs thus and so, give orders, submit reports, describe colours, take an interest in the feelings of others. What has to be accepted, the given – one might say – are facts of living". *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, I/630. A quote: O. Hanfling, *Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy*, Univ. of New York Press, 1989, p. 144.

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ilar, to talk about the conventional character of form of life (grammar) is to be able to change it, that is go beyond it, outside it – which is impossible. It is this point that fully falls under remarks made about linguistic games as a whole language, as a system. Having a given grammar (form of life), you can built various languages, but you cannot create a new, different grammar. The presumption that the possibility of denial, of negation of some notions gives such an opportunity is delusive as it resides as an opportunity in grammar itself.

One should agree with an observation that the viewpoint of convention includes an assessing aspect because it assumes an invention and a choice<sup>24</sup>. That is why it is reasonable to ask whether a given choice was good when we compare it with other choices, so we, as if, have the possibility of depicting it from the outside. That is exactly what happens in the case of conventions, institutions or games. But you cannot reasonably ask whether grammar (form of life) 'given to us' is good, because this would, as a consequence, entail the possibility of changing it for another one, that is the possibility of choosing it. Form of life, just as the logical form, sets the limits of language. As a result it can be said that what is in our case philosophically interesting is not the problem of the functioning of language in the context of rules but the analysis of the fact that rules that have meaning only when they are understood correctly do not help us to explain why we speak or behave in this and not the other way.

At the base of these remarks there lies a secret assumption that needs to be analysed. We should ask ourselves a question whether there exists only one form of life or whether there are many of them. We can consider two possibilities: when an answer would

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<sup>24</sup> O. Hanfling, *op.cit.*, p. 144.

turn into the direction of the monism or the pluralism of forms of life. An unambiguous decision is impossible because there are no data on this topic in Wittgenstein's works. Answers based on interpretations turn either into one or the other direction.

The monistic understanding of form of life is possible only when a category that interests us results from genetic features of men and when it belongs to their natural history. In this case it can be identified with "the common way of human reaction"<sup>25</sup>. A powerful confirmation of such a standpoint is the following fragment:

"What we are supplying are really remarks on the natural history of human beings; we are not contributing curiosities however, but observations which no one has doubted, but which have escaped remark only because they are always before our eyes" [PI 415].

The pluralist understanding of form of life is supported in two points of *Philosophical Investigations*. In the first one, in paragraph no. 19 language is identified with form of life. The natural consequence is a suggestion (the second part of the paragraph) that one can imagine many languages and hence many forms of life. It is not a manifested consequence and not necessarily a true one but it has some power of persuasion. Now, this kind of reasoning is incorrect. Wittgenstein explains it using a condition, "to imagine" is synonymous with, in our opinion, saying 'if we can/are able to imagine'. It is also clear that the expression "to imagine oneself a language" does not mean "to imagine oneself a natural language" such as Polish or English because their logical grammar (not a linguistic one) is identical. It is about a language with totally different grammar. What kind of grammar? – this kind of question has to be left without an answer because it is within this scope of difficulty that is connected with going beyond the logical form. It is logically impossible: "If a lion could speak, we would not be able to understand it" [PI 313]. Thereby, one cannot imagine an abstract possibility of other form of life, (we do not possess a criterion as a basis for distinction) because in fact we do not deal here with 'imagining oneself' but with a clearly 'notional depiction'.

The second example is Wittgenstein's statement from the second part of PI; he uses the plural number – "ways of life are

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<sup>25</sup> N. Garver, "Die Lebensform in Wittgenstein's *Philosophischen Untersuchungen*", in: *Grazer Philosophische Studien* 21, 1984.

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given". We get here two moments: 'being given' and the plural number. As a consequence, while interpreting this category it is assumed that particular fields of human existence are "forms of life". In this way religion<sup>26</sup> or psychoanalysis<sup>27</sup> are dealt with. Moreover, the category that interests us is understood as an alternative expression to "forms of culture"<sup>28</sup> or "facts of life"<sup>29</sup>. One can agree with neither any of these particular cases nor generally with this kind of reasoning.

The suggestion shown above which intended to illustrate similarities between the logical form and form of life seems to weaken such solutions effectively. Form of life is the basis of justification; it constitutes an impassable boundary for explanations. It needs to be realized that difficulties at understanding between exhibitors of different form of life would be absolutely impossible to overcome. And if we assumed that there exist different forms of life and that there are no problems with understanding them it would mean that they either have some common element or that they are united by a form standing above them. Hence the distinction of form into narrow and broad<sup>30</sup>, out of which the former – just like psychoanalysis – would be contained in the latter. However, this distinction is only an ostensible solution to the problem. Unauthorised (and unnecessary) mixing of the levels of argumentation resides in here. It also concerns other examples. The mistake con-

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<sup>26</sup> D.Z. Philips, "Religion in Wittgenstein's Mirror", in: A. P. Griffiths (ed.), *Wittgenstein Centenary Essays*, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991, p. 135–1350.

<sup>27</sup> M. Brearly, "Psychoanalysis: A Form of Life?", in: A. P. Griffiths (ed.), *Wittgenstein...*, *op.cit.*, p. 151–167.

<sup>28</sup> D.M. High, *Language, Persons, and Belief*, Oxford 1967; a quote after: G.F. Seidler, *Language and the World*, New York 1974, p. 105.

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<sup>30</sup> M. Brearly, *op.cit.*, p. 156–157.

sists in 'raising' linguistic games to the importance of form of life. An additional lack of identifying forms of life with the facts of life is the fact that this thesis is not argued enough.

Form of life expresses the broadest cultural context, within whose scope linguistic expressions function. This context is created by a countless number of sentences, "[...] countless different kinds of use of what we call 'symbols', 'words', 'sentences'" [PI 23]. A special emphasis should be put on the word 'use' because it becomes a practice in a social dimension, but you cannot neglect the forms of its (practice's) manifestations. These forms ("word", "symbol", "sentence") are cultural categories, essential to the possibility of communication. A relation of mutual dependence is here clearly seen: to be understood is to reside in some kind of a bigger whole (community), in other words, to be rooted in form of life. Form of life, on the other hand, manifests itself by means of linguistic games residing in it and each and every one of them is a specific practice. So every act becomes reasonable (understood) only in the context of social practice determined by rules and conventions. It leads us to the conclusion that the notion of practice "is something like a condition for the possibility of giving meaning to anything at all"<sup>31</sup>.

This way of functioning of linguistic games – form of life has further consequences: (a) justification is given only within a game and it ceases to be in force on its borders, (b) the way of presenting is given by a linguistic game; moreover, (c) grammar cannot be justified; and finally, d) a linguistic game is neither sensible nor insensible, it is something given. A particular conclusion for the criterion of justification flows from this and that is why the perspective of obliging certainty changes:

"«We are quite sure of it» does not mean just that every single person is certain of it, but that we belong to a community which is bound together by science and education"<sup>32</sup>.

In this context the question about what it means to be this or that should be construed as a question about the way in which the world is given to us. It is a question about our way in which we meet objects. Then the answer, which follows from Wittgenstein's later philosophy, states that being this or that (e.g. green) results

<sup>31</sup> K.P. Johannesen, "Language...", *op.cit.*, p. 118.

<sup>32</sup> L. Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, transl. D. Paul and G.E.M. Oxford: Anscombe, Basil Blackwell, 1979, paragr. 298.



### Remarks on L. Wittgenstein's Form of Life

from our use of language in a specific way. What follows is the fact that if language were not used in this way, things could be different than they are now. However, apart from the possibility of stating an empirical falsehood we do not possess means to understand it because: "We have a colour system as we have a number system. Do the systems reside in *our* or in the nature of things? How are we to put it? – *Not* in the nature of numbers or colours. Then is there something arbitrary about this system? Yes and no. It is akin both to what is arbitrary and to what is non-arbitrary"<sup>33</sup>.

This variety of introduced notions cannot obscure the cardinal fact that they all, together with form of life as the broadest notion, gain their meaning in language and through language. This fact means that language in a transcendental way is our depiction of the world, our world. This leads to the conclusion that the essence of this philosophy of Wittgenstein is showing the limits of our language as limits of our world<sup>34</sup>. This thesis can be understood empirically in such a way that language is dealt with narrowly and that it refers to the individual system of communication with its grammatical categories, etc. The world, on the other hand, is depicted broadly which entails the depiction of the fact as the world shows itself to an individual, and also general frames of understanding, which a subject refers to an object. In the transcendental way, this thesis claims that reality-for-us is constituted as a result of conceptual 'activity' of culture and language. Thereby 'a pure

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<sup>33</sup> L. Wittgenstein, *Zettel*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967, paragr. 357–358

<sup>34</sup> B. Williams, *Moral Luck*, Cambridge 1981, p. 150–151: "The new theory of meaning, like the old, points in the direction of transcendental idealism, and shares also the problem of our being driven to state it in forms which are required to be understood, if at all, in the wrong way", (p. 163). This interpretational thread is also taken up by A.W. Moore, "Transcendental Idealism in Wittgenstein, and Theories of Meaning", in: *The Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 35, no.139, p. 154–155.

datum' does not exist, what is given is a cultural fact. Just as the philosopher states: The limits of language are revealed in the fact that it is not able to describe that to which corresponds to a statement (sentence). All it can perform is to repeat a statement. This is connected with Kant's solution of the problem of philosophy<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> L. Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, transl. P. Winch, Oxford 1980, p. 10.